

UC Irvine Student Fee Advisory Committee

2020-2021 Annual Report

Introduction

As per Regental Policy 3101: The University of California Student Tuition and Fee Policy, the Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) on each UC campus is assigned the role of providing recommendations on the use of Student Services Fees (SSF) and each year's Student Services Fee as set by the Regents. In accordance with this charge, the UC Irvine SFAC provides the following recommendations on incremental SSF budget allocations, and a summary of recommendations for proposed 2021-2022 Course Materials and Services Fees (CMSF) and recommendations on the language included in the proposed compulsory campus-based student fee referenda which were to be included on 2021 spring student elections ballot.

I. Incremental Student Services Fee Revenue Recommendations:

SSF Allocation Recommendation Process

SFAC identified six areas of focus in this year's funding requests, consistent with past student survey data and committee deliberations. These priority themes were: Career & Professional Development, Academic Engagement, Student Life, Campus Climate, Health & Wellness, and Equity & Achievement. These pillars were shared with prospective units within the application materials to ensure that they could better align their requests with the purpose and ambitions of the SSF.

To facilitate review, each SFAC member individually reviewed all the proposals and provided an initial ranking. The full committee then reconvened to review each proposal individually, giving first consideration to requests that had received the highest average score. The committee is also providing feedback on each application so that each applicant can be empowered and informed to provide even stronger applications in future years.

Recommended SSF Allocations

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the SFAC was charged with making recommendations on total permanent allocations of \$254,881 including \$250,000 in new SSF funding for 2020-2021, plus \$4,881 in permanent funds remaining from the 2019-2020 cycle. In 2020-2021, the committee received funding allocation proposals from various campus units totaling \$646,940 in budget requests. The decrease from previous years was highlighted in many applications, with various units prioritizing items vulnerable to cuts or that would become harder to self-finance

due to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. With total requests outpacing the committee’s available budget, it was inevitable that many of the applicants would not receive additional SSF funding for 2020-2021 via the SFAC’s budget recommendation process. The following recommendations, listed below in order of highest priority, are for requests the committee considered as high-priority and true to what SFAC-recommended SSF funding is intended for: to fund services and activities that are not essential to the core academic function of the campus, but are deemed important and complementary to the university experience.

Table 1: 2020-2021 SFAC SSF Funding Recommendations Rank Proposed Allocations

Rank	Proposed Allocation	Recommended Funding
Student Affairs: Womxn’s Hub		
1	Permanent funds for six student intern positions (Student Assistant IV), responsible for providing all students with necessary support to execute services and provide important professional development opportunities.	\$27,000 (perm), plus benefits
Student Affairs: Sustainability Center		
2	Permanent funds for four student staff positions, each funded for 120 hours/quarter and 40 summer training hours at \$14.00/hour. The positions include Environmental Justice Collective Coordinator, Student Staff Media Coordinator, Student Staff Office Coordinator, and Student Leadership Institute for Climate Resilience Coordinator.	\$25,370 (perm), plus benefits
OVPTL: Peer Academic Advising		
3	Temporary funds for the continued support of Peer Academic Advising positions (PAA) for all schools and advising departments. Funds allocated will go towards the difference between PAA’s current permanent allocation, and what will be necessary to support the same number of PAA positions with the minimum wage increase, which is \$320 per 48 positions.	\$7,360 (temp), plus benefits

OVPTL: Student Success Initiative		
4	1.0 FTE Academic Achievement Counselor/Coordinator permanently funded to provide student support services such as outreach, retention, and advocacy to formerly incarcerated current UCI students, or students at Southwestern College that plan to enroll in UCI.	\$63,850 (perm), plus benefits
Student Affairs: Latinx Resource Center		
5	Permanent programming funds include \$5,000 for La Bienvenida (The Welcome), \$10,000 for general programming, and \$7,500 for the Latino Excellence Achievement Dinner (LEAD).	\$22,500 (perm)
Student Affairs: Womxn’s Hub		
6	Permanent funds for Graduate Student Assistant who will be provided experience in facilitating dialogues, project development, and community outreach. The position will also allow the Womxn’s Hub to create specific programming around dialogues and peer groups for both undergraduate and graduate student employees, as well as programming specific to graduate students.	\$12,000 (perm), plus benefits
Student Affairs: UCI CARE		
7	0.5 FTE Program Coordinator permanently funded to assist CARE office in coordinating larger campus-wide violence prevention initiatives and programs, identifying alternative funding sources, writing grant proposals, and providing added benefit to the overall UCI budget. This staff member will also provide front desk administrative support, ensure continuous in-person intake, and schedule and provide support for students affected by trauma.	\$28,600 (perm), plus benefits

Student Affairs: Cross Cultural Center		
8	0.5 FTE Admin Specialist/ Office & Events Manager permanently funded to provide services and programs to individual students, campus clubs and organizations, and campus departments. This staff member will be primarily responsible for event support and services platform.	\$22,000 (perm), plus benefits
Student Affairs: Dream Center		
9	Temporary funds for three student outreach mentors to assist with high school and community college students who reach out to the Dream Center for peer support. Mentors will provide campus resources and personal experiences with prospective students and assist with outreach for the annual conference.	\$12,000 (temp), plus benefits
Engineering/ICS		
10	Permanent funds for six OAI student interns, working as peer mentors and tutors providing support to First Gen, URG, and low-income students in Engineering and ICS.	\$15,600 (perm), plus benefits
Student Affairs: Latinx Resource Center		
11	Permanent funds to fully develop a center and provide annual consistency to students. Operational expenses to be used for phone services, office supplies, marketing annual subscription costs, and annual association membership fees.	\$6,000 (perm)
Student Affairs: Sustainability Center		
12	Funding for annual operating expenses including office supplies, communications, technology, and student staff resources.	\$8,000 (perm)
	Total Permanent Funds	\$230,920
	Total Temporary Funds	\$19,360
	Total Recommendations	\$250,280

The rationale for each funding recommendation is as follows:

1. Student Affairs: Womxn's Hub (\$27,000 permanent, plus benefits)

The Womxn's Hub has grown more prominent in its place at UCI to foster gender equity by developing various social justice initiatives, which have gained the support of many students. As funding here will be dedicated to student employees, SFAC found that this opportunity for six student employment positions will be essential for the growth and success of the Center. Also, SFAC continues to prefer opportunity and budget efficiency of student internships over FTE positions, and positions like this can help the students take part in the center's resources, gain meaningful skills and relationships, and grow in effective communication and collaboration skills.

2. Student Affairs: Sustainability Center (\$25,370 permanent, plus benefits)

The Sustainability Center continues to provide resources, education, and programs that further allow students of UCI to become more involved and aware of environmental issues, which is why SFAC deems these student positions to be vital for the continued growth and outreach of this organization. Since transferring from Housing to being part of Student Life and Leadership, the Center had lost some of their existing support to provide underlying campus programming. Ultimately, these positions are very student-facing, and the Center in general provides impactful employment opportunities for students.

3. OVPTL: Peer Academic Advising (\$7,360 temporary, plus benefits)

We are recommending partial, one-time funding for the PAAs because we find that UCI overrelies on the PAAs to perform basic curricular functions, some of which are better served through an improved digital interface within the UCI Registrar's page. The previous Provost opted to indefinitely postpone funding a project that would have allowed the Registrar page to enable each student portal to show which major and degree requirements have been fulfilled by which course in their academic history. This is an incredibly common feature that would help every student. By implementing these changes the burden placed on the PAAs would be lessened and we anticipate the need and reliance on PAAs to decrease and be closer to our peer institutions. We strongly encourage the Provost's Office to adopt this cost-saving change that will help all students.

4. OVPTL: Student Success Initiative (\$63,850 permanent, plus benefits)

This application would allow OVPTL to establish a Counselor/Coordinator position that would be dedicated to supporting formerly incarcerated students at UCI, and a cohort of 20-25 currently

incarcerated students who are earning their Associates Degree at Southwestern College and hope to matriculate to UCI in 2022. SFAC also believes that enabling OVPTL and SSI to hire this position would further encourage effective interventions for reducing recidivism through the access to higher education. SFAC has historically found it beneficial to have staff that are dedicated to serving specific marginalized and underrepresented student populations, and this is consistent with that long-held belief.

5. Student Affairs: Latinx Resource Center (\$22,500 permanent)

As a recently designated ‘Hispanic Serving Institution,’UCI has increased specific programming and staffing to support and recognize this vital portion of our community. SFAC found that providing funds that will go towards the Center’s big annual events such as the Latino Excellence Achievement Dinner (LEAD), given their precarious funding structure, can have a catalytic effect for the community’s inclusion at UCI.

6. Student Affairs: Womxn’s Hub (\$12,000 permanent, plus benefits)

As the Center focuses on womxn-specific needs by facilitating workshops, training, personal development, and community building for predominantly undergraduate student involvement, a Graduate Student Assistant would further the outreach and involvement from the graduate student community. Additionally, this will expand the opportunity for mentoring between undergraduate and graduate student employees in the center.

7. Student Affairs: UCI CARE (\$28,600 permanent, plus benefits)

Gaining more attention and support from the UCI community, the CARE Center aims to engage the community through educational programs and free, confidential support services to those impacted by violence. The request is being made to institutionalize a position that has been funded for the past nine years through three different federal grants. With the assistance of this position, various campus-wide violence prevention initiatives have gained more support and awareness, and this continued outreach will ultimately further increase visibility of such issues. We shared the Center’s concern in being able to continually rely on external support during a tumultuous economy and that it is deserving of committed funds.

8. Student Affairs: Cross Cultural Center (\$22,000 permanent, plus benefits)

With the growth of UCI’s underserved and underrepresented population, having an FTE dedicated to managing events of growing interest to students will strengthen the role the center plays on campus, and maximize its impact on such communities. Having previously allocated partial funding of this application to the center, SFAC has decided to dedicate permanent funds to this Office Manager position.

9. Student Affairs: Dream Center (\$12,000 temporary, plus benefits)

Based on data from UCI and preliminary findings across the country, underrepresented students experienced much greater challenges to enter or continue as college students. SFAC found the Dream Center's application promising to the retention of high school and community college students through a peer outreach/mentorship program. SFAC has decided that one-time funds will be allocated to see the effectiveness of the program. We are interested in learning the professional development gains for current students and impact on admissions prior to committing to permanent funding. Affording a trial period to assess a new program's effectiveness is common across the 10 SFACs within the UC. Should the Dream Center wish to pursue permanent funding for this in future years, they would need to utilize data from this trial period to demonstrate its effectiveness.

10. Student Affairs: Engineering/ICS (\$15,600 permanent, plus benefits)

With UCI's increasing Engineering and ICS admission rates, more academic support will be appreciated in the department in the form of peer-to-peer mentorships. We found this application promising for reducing the number of students transferring out of majors for academic reasons in addition to proactive support interventions that can improve student well-being. As another application that requested the opening of job opportunities for students, this employment opportunity for four student internships fit SFAC's support for student employment.

11. Student Affairs: Latinx Resource Center (\$6,000 permanent)

The Latinx Resource Center currently receives temporary operating and programming funds from Student Life and Leadership. However, the Center asks for permanent funds in order to formally establish and develop a well-resourced Center for students to continue building meaningful relationships, develop important networking and academic skills, and foster students' identities and on-campus communities. This continual support is critical for UCI's goals of inclusive excellence and being the models for HSI's around the country.

12. Student Affairs: Sustainability Center (\$8,000 permanent)

The Sustainability Center has recently moved from operating with Housing to the broader umbrella of Student Affairs, ostensibly to connect students with sustainability efforts outside of the housing communities. The move resulted in the Sustainability Center losing funding that it had received from UCI Housing and they would have to cut their programming in order to pay for basic supplies. SFAC has previously noted its frustration with creation or augmentation of well-meaning Centers and initiatives without the funding and resources they need to get off the

ground. In this instance, SFAC has found that the Sustainability Center has done well in creating important co-curricular programming and meaningful student leadership opportunities, and it would be disadvantageous to students if the Center was forced to cut these activities to pay for basic office supplies.

II. Course Materials and Services Fee (CMSF) Recommendations

In addition to reviewing SSF funding requests, SFAC also convened to review and recommend various CMSF requests from different academic units. The applications need to justify why a new cost is warranted and demonstrate a substantive level of student consultation. It was brought to SFAC's attention that several units opted to put some requests on hold until next year due to the concern that even a modest CMSF increase would have an outsized impact to many students and their families during the next year. We appreciate and concur with that approach. This year, SFAC was persuaded about the efficacy of the CMSF presented after additional conversations with the applicant academic units. The CMSF we recommend are: ENGRMAE52 Computer-Aided Design. The application demonstrated why a fee was appropriate, a more convenient option for students, and a last resort given the financial constraints of the academic units.

SFAC does not always recommend CMSF applications but felt comfortable recommending this application. The committee remains committed to monitoring CMSF increases in the best interest of the relevant student bodies. For this reason, SFAC strongly values the contributions of student feedback and in-person discussions with school representatives to aid the committee's understanding of the merit behind each CMSF request.

III. Spring 2021 Student Fee Referenda Recommendations

The committee reviewed and provided feedback to three referenda for the 2021 spring elections ballot. SFAC reviewed and provided feedback to the Merage Student Association (MSA) who proposed raising their existing fee. SFAC recommended placing it on the ballot. The MSA measure did not pass due to an inability to meet the stated quorum.

Second, the committee reviewed and provided feedback to the undergraduate student government on the draft language for the proposed student referenda for the Womxn's Hub fee and recommended inclusion of the referenda on the 2021 spring elections ballot with suggestions. The Womxn's Hub fee did not pass due to an inability to meet the stated quorum.

Third, the committee reviewed and provided feedback to the undergraduate student government on the draft language for the proposed student referenda for Esports Arena fee and recommended inclusion of the referenda on the 2021 spring elections ballot with suggestions. The Esports Arena fee did not pass due to an inability to meet the stated quorum.

IV. Moving Forward

Considering the changing fiscal landscape of UCI, SFAC hopes to be a greater resource to the Provost and EVC, the Budget Office, Student Affairs and campus units as administrators continue to explore budget cuts and augmentation given UCI's state-, tuition-, and fee-based revenue streams have largely remained flat in constantly dollars or, at best, approximate increases at pace with inflation. SFAC is experienced in administering scarce resources and believes that its track record of recommendation illustrates its ability to understand the most crucial investments in student services and the student experience.

SFAC feels strongly that UCI's adaptation during the 2020-2021 academic year has highlighted opportunities for a greater efficiency of resources that can deliver a better learning and living experience to students. As we noted previously with the PAA Advisors, strategic adaptation within a hybrid learning environment can better connect students, especially marginalized students, with the information and resources they need to thrive. We encourage the Provost's Office to engage with the 2021-2022 SFAC, ASUCI, and AGS to identify these opportunities to help propel UCI into its brilliant future.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve our student body and UCI campus in this way.

Sincerely,

Connor Strobel
Chair, UCI Student Fee Advisory Committee

Sarah Alkhatib
Vice Chair, UCI Student Fee Advisory Committee

2020-2021 SFAC members